REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in the present application but stand rejected. Claims 1, 12, and 18 have been amended. In view of the amendments and the following remarks, the Applicant requests the Examiner's thoughtful reconsideration.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §102: The Examiner rejected Claims 1-20 under §102 as being anticipated by US Pub 2002/0102119 to Christodoulou.

Christodoulou describes a system in which print jobs may have time constraints, that is, the print job needs to be completed within a given time frame. For such print jobs, the rasterization of a print job can be distributed across two or more printers. Christodoulou describes a print manager operating on a computer (40) manages all printing operations. Christodoulou, paragraph [0030]. Upon receipt of a print job, the print manager assesses its size and identifies a primary printer. Before the primary printer RIPs any portion of the print job (step 510 of Fig. 5A), the print manager, first determines if the primary printer is capable of printing the print job within a predetermined period of time (step 506, Fig. 5A). If not, the print manager divides the print job, sending one portion to the primary printer and a second portion to a secondary printer (steps 526 and 528, Fig. 5A). The two printers RIP their respective portions (steps 530 and 534, Fig. 5A) and the primary printer prints the print job (step 614, Fig. 5B).

In other words, Christodoulou describes a system in which the determination to distribute the rasterization of a print job is made prior to any portion of that print job first being rasterized.

Claims 1 is directed to a method for cooperative rasterization of print data in an enterprise network that includes multiple printers. As amended, Claim 1 recites the following:

> 1. rasterizing, by a primary printer of the multiple printers, a portion of a print job to input raster bits into a raster buffer associated with the primary printer;

2. determining a time taken to rasterize the portion of the print job;

3. identifying, by the primary printer, a potential underflow condition of the raster buffer, the potential underflow condition occurring if the determined time taken to RIP the portion of the print job is greater than a time that will be taken by the primary printer to print the portion of the print job;

4. responsive to identifying, the primary printer communicating an un-rasterized portion of the print job to the secondary printer for the secondary printer to rasterize, the primary printer not rasterizing the un-rasterized portion;

5. receiving, by the primary printer, raster bits corresponding to the un-rasterized portion from the secondary printer; and

6. printing, by the primary printer, all raster bits corresponding to the print job.

Claim 1 recites rasterizing a portion of a print job, determining how long it took to rasterize that portion, and then identifying a potential underflow condition that occurs if the time taken for rasterizing the portion exceeds the time taken for printing that portion. If a potential underflow condition is identified, then the rasterization of the print job is distributed across two or more printers. In other words, according to claim 1, the determination of whether the rasterization of a print job is to be distributed across multiple printers occurs after a portion of that print job has been rasterized and a time taken for rasterizing that portion has been determined.

As explained above, Christodoulou teaches making the determination as to whether rasterization of a print job is to be distributed across multiple printers before any part of the print job has been rasterized or even communicated from Christodoulou's print manager to a printer.

Consequently, Christodoulou fails to teach or suggest (a) rasterizing, by a primary printer of the multiple printers, a portion of a print job to input raster bits into a raster buffer associated with the primary printer, (b) determining a time taken to rasterize the portion of the print job, and then (c) identifying, by the primary printer, a potential underflow condition of the raster buffer, the potential underflow condition

occurring if the determined time taken to RIP the portion of the print job is greater than a time that will be taken by the primary printer to print the portion of the print job.

For at least this reasons, Claim 1 is patentable over Christodoulou as are Claims 2-10 which depend from Claim 1.

Claim 11 is directed to a computer-readable medium comprising computer-program instructions executable by a processor coupled to the computer-readable medium, the computer-program instructions comprising instructions for performing operations such as those recited in a method as recited in claim 1. For at least the same reasons Claim 1 is patentable, so is Claim 11.

Claim 12 is directed to computer-readable media comprising computer-program instructions for cooperative rasterization of print data in an enterprise network. The media includes instructions for implementing the method of Claim 1. For at least the same reasons Claim 1 is patentable, so are Claim 12 and Claims 13-18 which depend from Claim 12.

Claim 19 is directed to a computing device having various components for implementing the method of Claim 1. For at least the same reasons Claim 1 is patentable, so are Claim 19 and Claim 20 which depends from Claim 19.

Conclusion: In view of the foregoing remarks, the Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Consequently, early and favorable action allowing these claims and passing the application to issue is earnestly solicited. The foregoing is believed to be a complete response to the outstanding Office Action.

Respectfully submitted,

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